LUCILLE LOVE. The Girl of Mystery

A Soul Thrilling Story of Love, Devotion, Danger and Intrigue

By the "MASTER PEN"

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CHAPTER XXXV. A Girl With One Idea.

EHIND her, Lucille could hear the pursuit. Not a second could she spare for thought of regret. The wounded, dying man, even though he had given up his life to assist her, was obliterated from her mind as she dug tiny heels into the fianks of her mount and urged him

The moon that had seemed so friendly but a short while before, the stars that had seemed friendly candles placed in their Celestial sockets to light her placed in their Celestial sockets to light may, had now become dread enemies, lighting up the course she was taking. Only the thick, tropical vegetation helped her at all, the giant Cacti, the huge palms with their low hung fronds, the shadows of the bushes and hedges casting mystic shadows of the bushes and hedges casting mystic shapes here, there, and everywhere and bewildthose who followed.

Times, above the ringing of her horse's hoofs, would hear the shouts of those behind her. Now and then a message of lead would whine its adful tale into her ears, but all these were growing fainter, less distinct with every leap of the animal she bestrode. Remained now but the last line of pickets she knew Loubeque had posted about the ranch. If only she could get past that line then it would be a desperate un-dertaking for the one who met her on neutral

It had been a bitter struggle to bide her Often she had felt the temptation to run away from this place, even though she knew her chances for final success were nil, but always had she conquered and waited for the ripening of op-

And just when everything appeared hopeless when the long road was darkest, love had planted its seed within the heart of Loubeque's follower and urged him to the sacrifice of honor and life to her escape. Surely she could not fail after of her coming this far.

Came the tolling of a bell from the ranch house. There was the unmistakable message of her escape in its brazen tongue. She looked frightened. Rockets of vari-colored flames were criss-crossing the blue vault of night, a myriad of man-made shooting stars retailing her flight to every one of the band.

Desperate though she knew they were, from these signs, a feeling of despair instead of confidence grew steadily in her heart. Despite the speed of her mount, the limits of Loubeque's great ranch had not yet been reached. And after the ranch—if there was to be any "after"—what

As though in answer to the unspoken ques-tion, simultaneously with the looming of the bayonet fence before her, two men leaped from the shadows, springing at the horse's bit. The beast swerved violently, almost unseating her and tossing the man on his left into a cactus, where he rolled, howling in painful rage, as the needles pierced him. The second man had a firm held upon the horse's head. Lucille saw he had caught the brute by the nostrils with his free band and was smothering him into docility. In-stinctively she leaned far over and snatched the revolver he wore from its holster, jamming it viciously up under his chin. The fellow's head shot back jerkily, his eyes glaring glassily into hers, then he staggered back, clutching futilely for the weapon she had seized.

With a hard, trickling, little laugh, she clubbed the weapon and drew the sight roughly across her horse's neck, scratching him so fiercely he fairly leaped over the distance that separated her from the broad gate beside which the two sentinels had stood. As he darted madly close she could feel the breath of it upon her

e Something primitive within her was roused a wild, fierce joy of combat which she had never felt before. Leaning far forward upon the brute's neck, she turned and fired squarely at the spurt of flame that was leaping towards out of the night. She saw the man leap into the flame, his arms outstretched as a broad jumper throws himself at the tape, then dug her heels once more into the dumb brute's fishks and sped

on through the night.

Hours, it seemed, she rode, with never the slightest slackening of the mad pace to which she originally set her mount. He was lathered with foam but she had no pity on him. Her brain was fiercely chaotic, wild with the bloody memories of the night, intoxicated with the mad-ness which had made a primitive thing out of her femininity, obsessed by the delight of feelherself able to be self-protecting among the most desperate of men.

Before, unconsciously, she had feared the potentialities of Hugo Loubeque's strength. The mental power of her beauty and innocence. Now, she knew these things to be but a cloak with which she had masked a woman, unrecognizable even to herself. She feared him no more, feared his threats no more. An old saying she had heard a grizzled veteran of her father's command heard a grizzied veteran of her father's command once utter came back to her as she looked at the heavy weapon she still clung to: "Judge Colt made all men equal." She laughed triumph-antly at the knowledge gained first hand of the

antly at the knowledge gained first hand of the truth of this saying.

From now on she had every advantage. She was free and she knew where the stolen papers and documents were secreted in the mysterious house of inexplicable disappearing rooms and stairs. She had the diary of Hugo Loubeque in her possession, and she had the ruby necklace which was equivalent to vast wealth. She had which was equivalent to vast wealth. She had the outward seeming of guilelessness, was girlish and delightfully effeminate, but she knew the power of the claws she had, and her eyes rested fondly on the revolver, even as she urged

her horse to greater speed.

Across the tractless plain she rode with only
the moon and stars looking down upon her, a
wild, cerie figure of a bareheaded girl. Behind
the pursuit had died away and before there was
nothing save a slender ribbon of water that the

nothing save a siender ribbon of water that the moon buried its face in contentedly.

She heard voices, low pitched, yet carrying far in the silence of the night. Instantly she drew rein and flung herself to the ground, listening intently. Creeping cautiously to a slight rise, she looked down upon an adobe shack, before which a little squad of barefooted Mexicans loafed idly, their brown hands lazlly supporting old-fashioned Springfield rifes, such as ahe recalled the soldiers of Uncle Sam to have carried in the old days.

in the old days.

From where she watched she suddenly no From where she watched she suddenly noticed a stir among the men. From the interior of the shack stepped a gaudily dressed little Mexican, evidently an officer, from the awkward salutes accorded him by the tatterdemalions gathered before the house. For some reason she could not analyze, Lucille listened eagerly breath coming in quick, eager gasps as she overheard their daring plot to cross the river and stampede the corral of an American ranchman. If little my of delight came from her lips as she heard their allusions to the United States cav-alry they must sift through before hoping for

Her eyes were glittering with excitement when she stole cautiously to the adobe shack, peering inside slowly and carefully before entering. She knew all their plans and her blood was boiling but she also knew from what they had said that they too would be on the look-out for any upset to the well laid plot.

From a chest in the corner, which she hurriedly overhauled, she drew a similar suit to the one the little leader had worn. It would just about fit her and she must take no chances of trying to cross the Rio Grande attired as she was.

Swiftly she changed, for every mo Swiftly she changed, for every moment now was precious to others as well as to herself. Daughter of General Sumpter Love, she was aftre with rage at the way the Mexicans had spoken of the border patrol of her country, the presumption of the plan she had heard outlined. The gaudy costume fitted her beautifully and the broad straw sombrero, with its weight of silver cording and tassels made it easy for her feminine features to be unrecognizable even as it concealed her long hair.

She was well pleased with herself when, again, she mounted her horse. The beast had been ready to drop in his tracks any moment

again, she mounted her horse. The beast had been ready to drop in his tracks any moment and she had killed two birds with one stone while changing her costume. Cautiously toward the glittering ribbon of river she rode, her eyes always alert for any sign of the Mexican forag-

The horse hesitated at the bank of the stream but Lucille boldly urged him forward. Cautiously the beast advanced one foot before the other, sinking lower and lower in the water, until, his feet giving out from under him, he launched out. Lucille held to the reins and thanked her stars for the forethought which had induced her to change the akirts which would have weighted her down.

She heard a huge sigh of relief as, dripping and dishevelled she stood upon the "right side of the Rio." Up and down the bank she looked for signs of the border patrol but none was in might. Breathlessly she remounted and rode up and down. Still no welcome challenge from a soldier. But in the distance she could make out

The chances were it was one of the Mexicans. But something must be done if the ranchman was to be saved from the plot she had overheard. Fiercely she urged her mount toward the speck in the distance, until her heart sank as recognized the man for one of the plotters. Cautiously she followed him, finding it very

difficult because of the man's own fear of detec-tion. Hours it seemed to her she pursued the slinking figure until it joined with two others. Gradually, after a few miles journeying, a great blaze shot high in air, a blaze punctuated by shots and wild cries.

The three men cruelly dashed their spurs into the sides of their horses. Came a thunder of sound as a great bunch of cattle from the remuda of the American were driven toward her by the fiendish Mexicans, Lucille saw the her by the fiendish Mexicans, Lucille saw the danger she was in of being trampled underfoot by that wild herd, driven to frenzy by the flames and popping revolvers from behind them. She urged her own horse to the right, escaping just as the remuda whizsed by her in a wild riot of sound. Here and there the Mexicans had as-sembled themselves, always alert, marvelous horsemen all, keeping the frightened beasts to-gether while they drove them in a direct line for

Lucille felt a shot slash through the sleeve of her jacket. She reined in her horse instantly, for she knew the Mexicans had passed. As she tached, grizzled man, driving bullet after bullet after the marauders. She did not speak, did not even rein in, but urged her own horse beside his, drawing her revolver.

The ranchman uttered a bewildered ejacula tion as he saw she was of his own blood.

"I was trying to get there in time to warn you," she gasped. "There's a chance of driving them into the patrol, if you know where it is."

Again he grunted his amazement at her woman's voice.

Without another word, as though complete understanding had been established, he waved to the right. She drew her revolver as her fresh ened horse ate up the ground beneath his feet. Time and again she fired, the sound of her own gun mingling with the rapid discharge of the ranchman's to make it sound like a fusillade. Came a sudden abrupt wheeling of the stampede. Came a rifle shot, more like a cloth being ripped it was than anything else. Lucille heard the sharp voice of the sentry, saw the hesitancy of the Mexicans even as they huddled close together, facing that solitary figure in olive khaki, be-striding his mount as though carved from

They looked hesitatingly behind them. The ranchman's revolver sounded and their leader threw his hands in the air and flopped over upon his horse's neck. The soldier's voice rang out to their short carbines in token of surrender. The sentry waited until Lucille and the ranchman came up then listened to their story, at the end demanding their presence before his command-

The girl listened silently to the expressions of gratitude bestowed upon her by the ranch man, then watched him as, following the captives he entered the house to which they had been brought. It took but a little while for the sentry to emerge with his captives, then she caught her breath with a cry of delight as she recognized a young officer whom she had known in the Philippines. He beckoned her silently, seating himself at his desk and writing busily for a moment before nodding briskly that she should speak. A dancing imp of mischief was in her eyes as she uttered his name.

"Lieutenant Carmody, don't you remember The young officer's eyes opened as wide as his mouth. He stared dumbly at the slender figure before him, knitting his brows in an attempt at concentration. Then Lucille removed

tempt at concentration. Then Lucille removed her hat, allowing the roughly piled-up masses of hair to tumble over her shoulders while she laughed roguishly as she saw that still he did not clearly recall har.

"Lucille Love!" he gasped, half rising from his seat, his hands clutching the table edge so tightly his knuckles glinted a blueish black in the light from the incandescent bulb. "Lucille Love or her ghost."

"A very tired and hungry ghost," she laughed delightedly. "Just try me and see."

As he summoned his orderly and gave him instructions to bring instantly some canned stuff, Lucille hurriedly sketched out her advensures to him, eagerly persusding him when his face showed that he half believed she had taken leave of her senses. His expression was very grave when she finished.

"I suppose you know that Glasses."

grave when she numbed.
"I suppose you know that Gibson was per-

"The General is under a heavy cloud of suspic-ion. He has requested an inquiry into his own conduct in the affair. The messages were most important, in fact their sale could harm us greatly."

The reflection made the dreary trip a very happy one, served to while away the time with dreams of such surpassing beauty that, at times, she had to close her eyes to shut out the radiance of them. With overy clamping of the wheels upon the frogs of the track, her heart gave up a song of confidence. For Hugo Loubeque had put forward his own strength against her and added to this the strength of a portion of his organization. He had imprisoned her in two apparently impregnable places, and still she was here, all unbeknownst to him, speeding to-



"And the people think that I."
"You have long since been given up for wheel. Harley told of taking you abourd the

drowned. Harley told of taking you aboard the Empress. The wreck is common knowledge, of course. I must reassure them immediately."

"No," she shook her head decidedly. "I have gone this far and I firmly believe some influence is at work on my behalf, helping me to do things better than any man could do them. The grief of my loved ones must have let down a bit by now and it would be so much better if I could let them know that I am alive when I am

'No," she shook her head firmly. "You have no ides how dangerous a game it is, working against Hugo Loubeque. There is every chance that he may yet defeat me, that I may be killed or injured before I succeed. Father would deor injured before I succeed. Father would demand my return, papers or no papers. Can't you see what it means to me, what it would mean to be compelled to stop the fight after all I have been through, after everything tells me that Providence is working with me against this man? Can't you see that the man who has ruled and ruined nations, who has compelled thousands to do his will, has every chance of success against anything a man could do?"

against anything a man could do?" smiled the superior smile with which men are accustomed to treat the statements of women, when they magnify the work they have done and the influence against them. Lucille merely took the diary of the spy from its hiding place and placed it in his hands, watching the swift changes of expression upon his face as he read, the muttered ejaculations of incredulous wonder and admiration and fear and terror with which he perused the items in the career of the greatest power working and the career of the greatest power working and the state of the greatest power working and the career of the greatest power working and the state of the st career of the greatest power working against his country. Finally he returned it to the owner.

"Please eat," he said quietly, motioning to-ward the end of the desk where the orderly was spreading a cold repast of canned meats and vegetables and steaming coffee, "and forgive me if I can't talk now. I must think what is best

Lucille smiled as she devoted her attention to the repast. It seemed that centuries must have elapsed since she discovered the bars of her window had been sawed through. It seemed that nothing so delicious had ever been served a mere ortal as the coarse food before her. She finally finished to find young Lieutenant Carmody star-ing fixedly at her, his brow cloudeds "It's too much for me," he muttered

"Of course it is," she laughed heartily. "And would have frightened me almost to death if had known beforehand what manner of man was. But I have tested strength against him often that it's becoming the very breath of to me. I firmly believe that I will win." "But why?"

"Because," and all the mirth had gone from her face, all the laughter from the eyes that were reverently lifted, "because everything I have done has been done for the sake of love, and because love has watched over me and helped me. That is the reason, Lieutenant Carmody. Hugo Loubeque can never be beaten or brought to justice because of fear or hate, for his own powers in that direction are greater than those of nations. He believes and has proven his be-lief that nations are no stronger than the weak-

lief that nations are no stronger than the weakest man who is vested with any authority in
them. His diary shows that. I know that."

"Well?" The officer unwillingly agreed.

"What do you propose doing? Isn't there some
way in which I can help you?"

"Yes." she answered promptly, "you can let
me have money. You can tell me how to dispose
of one of these valuable rubies, or all of them, and you can help me catch the first train for San

Carmody whistled aloud his amazed delight Carmody whistled aloud his amazed delight as he regarded the marvelous jewels in the necklace she laid upon the table. Carefully he expatiated upon the fabulous value of the thing the care she must use in disposing of such jewels, jewels which would tempt the most honest men to forsake the paths of rectitude. Then he loaned her the money he had and insisted upon her lying down and resting until he could skirmish up some proper clothing and find out about the trains.

It was dawn before she wakened and, thought she felt alarm lest he had allowed her to miss a train, his reassurance and the sight of the clothing he had found for her made things seem much brighter. Then, too, the ninety odd dollars in currency seemed far more than even the rubies about her neck. Several hours later she boarded the train, assisted by a worried looking young officer, her heart light and gay for she felt within herself that the journey that had been so long and so hazardous was finally nearing an end; that the familiar, dear faces would surround her on every side.

ward his house, intent upon besting him once

and for all.

And, in the compartment at which she stared with unseeing eyes Thompson regarded har in the mirror, his own eyes glittering with malicious triumph and with avarice.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Thompson Finds Persistence Is Its Own Reword.

THOMPSON crouched back in his compariment, feigning alumber while the porter made up his bed. He awakened drowally and tipped the man, then made pretence of slipping out of his cost. Immediately the porter disappeared he became the incarnation of energy. His hands nervously fumbled with the lock of his grip, opening it finally and disclosing a secret trap in the bottom from which he took an atomiser, a pair of nimeers, and a bottle of pair vised fluid. pair of nippers, and a bottle of pale viscid fluid.

For an hour he walted, motionless, not even

his fixed eyes blinking as he regarded the cur-tains of the berth Lucille occupied. After that time he slipped to the smoking compartment, to find the porter engaged in an argument with the club car man. He listened a moment then strolled back to his compartment.

Not a sound did he make as he strode boldly down the lurching alsle, his tools in his hand. Deftly parting the curtains, he looked down upon the sleeping girl. No atom of pity was in his he allowed them to rest upon the glowing strand of stones about her neck. Swiftly he leaned over, applying his pinchers

to the gas jet and unscrewing it so that the odor of the gas slowly began filling the stuffy section. Then he gently sprayed the ether acro her face, never moving when she unconsciously stirred to fight off the anaesthetic.

Her breathing became heavier while her lips took on a bluish tinge. The gas was becoming stronger and he knew her condition would be ascribed to asphyxiation when she recovered from the effects of the ether. Stooping, with no appearance of care now, he unfastened the rubies from her throat. A moment he waited, slipping them in his pocket, then he slipped back

his own compartment. Carefully he repacked his grip, tucking the klace in his breast pocket. Against the door be crouched, waiting.
No trace of anxiety he showed. He was con-

fident of himself. Came a clamping down upon the ties as the air brakes worked. Thompson threw open his window, looking out to discover it was opposite a tiny station. With a pocket knife he cut out the screen that separated him

Cautiously he looked up and down the track. The train was slowing down. He tossed his bag far out from him then slipped partially through the window. The lights of the station were almost in his eyes when he jumped, landing on his feet and regaining his balance with an effort. Then he permitted himself the luxury of a smile.

The next train through would be time enough and—the booty in his breast pocket was

worth many risks. CHAPTER XXXVII.

The Colorless Passenger With a Sear.

LUCILLE felt herself struggling with a desper ate enemy, one whose fingers were of steel as they fastened themselves about her throat, grasped at her breath and held it despite her utmost efforts. Even in the effort to waken, unsuccessful though it was, she seemed to recognize the calm, imperturbable, business-like fea-

Then she felt a sensation of ease and com-fort and peace such as had not been hers for a long time, and she allowed herself to drift away upon the gently flowing river that hummed its song in her cars.

violently by the conductor and a porter whose ebony face had changed to a saffron shade. Her head ached so fearfully that she pressed her feverish palms to her temples to keep it from bursting. Her throat and mouth felt as though she had been subsisting upon a diet of cotton

She staggered to her feet and stood, dazed and bewildered, in the aisle of the car. The conductor turned her over to two women, who stood with her upon the platform, supporting her trembling figure while the fresh air drove away the fumes of chlordorm and gas to which she had been subjected.

First she felt the rush of the train, the dotting of lights in the distance, the rush of the train past the lights only to come upon a new cluster. And she was reahing rushing rushing just like these lights to a cavernous blackness

which she could not describe even to herself.

Suddenly the reason for her being upon the train came to her and her hands sought her breast, then her throat. With a little cry she staggered back into the arms of the women.

"Robbed!" she gasped. I have been robbed! The women looked at one another pityingly, then incredulously and finally believingly as they caught the pallor and sanity on the girl's face.

"Try and think, my dear," one of them plead. "You have been asphyxisted—the light-socket in your section was loose and the escaping gas."

Lucille did not answer. Summoning all her strength, she turned the knob of the door and sought the conductor. He looked incredulous at the girl's charge, but investigation showed that the at had been tampered with. Nothing, however, could be done before reaching San Francisco except a search of the ear.

Lucille went with him from place to place, assuning every face. But she knew who had done this thing. When she fought against the fingers of the drug they had been the fingers of Thompson. When she had slipped from peaceful slumber into the drugged stupor it was Thompson she had been bravely fighting.

But Thompson—where had he disappeared? What had become of the man? She knew it had been him, knew it even though the face she looked into while she fought had been scarred recently, showed a white streak that gave a stnister expression to his otherwise smug countenance.

expression to his otherwise smug

She wondered if that streak had been the bullet-made one of the Mexican who, for love of her, had given up his life out there on the ranch of Loubeque. Whether or no, she was positive that Thompson was the thief.

"We know who the thief was, Miss," re-ported the conductor a little later. "He had the compartment facing your section. The screen is cut out. He must have dropped out the window after working his game

Lucille smiled faintly.

"A medium sized man, rather dark, plainly dressed, with features that nobody would notice especially and—a livid scar across the side of his face," she murmured.

The man looked at her in surprise.

"Thompson," she murmured. "Yes, it was
Thompson. I was positive from the first."

As the conductor corroborated her description of the thief, she lay back against the dusty cushions of her seat, idly watching the train charging across the landscape. She had started badly but she cienched her teeth firmly. Her purpose was firm as ever, her rage a bit highes.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

HUGO LOUBEQUE cursed profoundly to himself as he paced up and down the floor of his San Francisco house. From below came the sounds of his servants, searching into er nook and cranny of the mysterious house the packet of papers and documents he k Lucille had hidden here. Already they had b

through the place twice and as yet no sign had some to light of their resting place.

He frowned heavily as he went to the window and looked down upon the street, described now save for the old woman who trudged toward the place. She carried a healest of now save for the old woman who trudged toward the place. She carried a basket of fruit over her arm and Loubeque smiled grimly as she dis-appeared from his sight, then reappeared after being turned away from the door by the servant. They had been bothered a great deal the

last two days by all sorts of women, peddlers and agents, bothered until he had orlered an explicit sign over the entrac them. But now, as he idly studied the woman, something about her caught and held his atten-tion. She moved slowly but there was an affectation about that slowness which had no kin with

Came a ring at the door bell as the post-man stepped up the little walk. But Loubeque did not heed him. His eyes were fastened, like lamp post. Suddenly the bent form straighten and he read the impulsive resolve of Youth in every movement of the illy attired old woman. Her hand groped upon the ground. He saw her pick up a stone and smash the fire alarm. He waited, his eyes still fastened undeviatingly upon

Came the sound of fire engines, rolling down the street in a black cloud of smoke, engines, they always seemed, of destruction that could have nothing to do with saving lives or property. have nothing to do with saving lives or property.

Loubeque watched the woman. She dashed toward the captain as he darted up in his light
buggy, pointing eagerly toward the house of the
spy, her eyes glowing with excitement. Then
Loubeque smiled as he pressed a bell and ordered the search to stop immediately.

Before the rush of firemen with their hose

the door opened. Their heavy feet slumped upon the stairs, throughout the house. But Loubeque did not move. He watched Lucille as she tossed aside the habiliments she had worn over her girlish clothes. She looked swiftly about to make certain no one was in sight. Then she swiftly approached the extra truck upon which the slickers and hats of the firemen were laid. Once more she looked about her then flung herself into a long rubber coat and jammed a helmet

Loubeque smiled once more, a broader smile Loubeque sinited once more, a broader sinite this time, as she darted up the walk and into his house. Swiftly he peered over the stairs. Without an instant's hesitation Lucille had sped to the basement. He tiptoed to the room that had been assigned her when he held her captive here. Pressing a button, one wall of the room opened. He peered below, watching her as, below, she searched feverishly for the papers.

Loubeque quietly moved back to room. Slowly his fingers reached out. Came a slight clink of machinery. Then the spy stepped below and received the assurance of the fire captain that everything was well. His smile was that of a man quite positive that everything was

CHAPTER XXXIX.

The Best Laid Plans.

LUCILLE started violently, just as her hands encountered the packet of begrimed papers and documents. A faint, humming sound mingled with the heavy tread of the firemen above st But she had won, was victorious after many de-feats. Still, that sound—

She seemed to have heard it before. With a little cry of horror she looked up, her hands clasping the packet to her breast. The room that had been her boudoir was slowly closing down upon her, was moving down, down, down its dark floor threatening to crush her like a letter-press closes upon its contents. Then it

She looked toward the door through which she had entered, her delight at the escape dying before the sight of Loubeque's tall, saturnine figure in the doorway, the glowing cigar tip pick-ing out his every feature, the hateful smile upon his face. He extended his hand, bowing gracefully, sardonically.
"The packet of papers, Miss Lucille, if you

(Continued Next Week.)